

# North Korean Nuclear Negotiations: Strategies and Prospects for Success

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# North Korean Nuclear Negotiations: Strategies and Prospects for Success

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I would like to thank Chairman Leach for the invitation to testify before this committee on the current situation and prospects for resolving the second North Korean nuclear crisis. As you all know, a protracted stalemate over this issue has simmered for almost three years since October 2002. Following North Korea's escalation of the crisis, North Korea's decision to kick out IAEA inspectors and to announce its withdrawal from the NPT, and the unraveling of most components of the U.S.-DPRK Geneva Agreed Framework, a new negotiation process among six parties most directly concerned with the North Korean nuclear issue was established with the PRC as the host in August of 2003. It was not until the third round of dialogue in June of 2004 that the United States and North Korea respectively put forward formal proposals to address the core issues in dispute.

Although the respective proposals made at that time are regarded by some as opening positions in a negotiation process, there has been an extended pause in the negotiations of over one year. With the announcement last weekend that the negotiations will resume and with Secretary Rice currently completing her second visit to the region in five months, this is clearly a critical moment in attempts to resume the negotiation process and to build on the proposals tabled in June of last year. The task of this panel is to assess the administration's strategy and prospects for success in achieving the commonly-held objective of the six party dialogue: the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

I believe it is mistaken to assume that the approach of the second Bush administration to North Korea will inevitably be identical to that of the first Bush administration, especially as the six party dialogue appears ready to resume. While there are many continuities, there is also room for course corrections and now some evidence of revised approaches based on news of current developments. The administration is pursuing the same policy objectives toward North Korea, but there is an opportunity for a new team to consider more effective methods by which to achieve those goals. In recent months there have been more frequent public expressions of interest and concern about the urgency of the North Korean issue from Capitol Hill—including Chairman Leach's steady encouragement not to be fixated on a single process at the expense of the opportunity to achieve substantive progress. One presumes that this might be one factor that could catalyze a redoubling of efforts within the administration to enhance both the effectiveness of and to achieve early returns on its approach to North Korea.

Another challenge to continuity in policy implementation is that the fundamental problem has taken a different and more worrisome form following North Korea's announcement that it has nuclear weapons and the suspension of its participation in the six party

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<sup>1</sup> This testimony represents my personal views, and does not represent the views of The Asia Foundation or Pacific Forum CSIS. Comments or questions can be directed to Scott Snyder at 202-588-9420 or SnyderSA@aol.com.

dialogue on February 10<sup>th</sup> and its call for negotiations on mutual disarmament on March 31<sup>st</sup>. It will be important for the DPRK to reaffirm that the original agenda for Six Party negotiations—the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula—has not changed in light of these statements when North Korea returns to the negotiating table. Finally, the external circumstances and priorities of North Korea’s neighbors are not precisely the same as each other or as those of the United States—a factor that is of critical importance as we consider prospects of success of current strategy in the context of a return to the negotiating framework.

### **An Assessment of Six Party Talks**

The Six Party Talks have emerged as the primary diplomatic vehicle for seeking North Korea’s denuclearization. All parties to the Six Party Talks have agreed that a nuclear North Korea represents a threat to regional stability and have identified dismantlement as their shared objective. It is not yet clear, however, whether all the participants in the talks can agree on a satisfactory solution on how to achieve dismantlement of North Korea’s nuclear program.

In adopting the six party talks as its preferred vehicle for negotiation with the North, the Bush administration is arguably applying lessons learned from the experience of the first North Korean nuclear crisis. Although the Clinton administration successfully concluded the Agreed Framework through bilateral negotiations with the North in 1994, had to rely on allies in South Korea and Japan during the course of implementation. Some critics in Seoul and Tokyo claimed “no taxation without representation” as a criticism of the expectation that they would pay for the implementation of the Agreed Framework despite their exclusion from negotiations with the North that directly affected the national security interests of South Korea and Japan. More importantly, the North Korean nuclear issue involved South Korean and Japanese vital security interests that should have required their presence at the negotiating table.

Thus, the prior experience of the Agreed Framework—and North Korea’s subsequent failure to live up to the spirit and letter of the agreement—carried with it two lessons in the view of the Bush administration: a) don’t negotiate bilaterally with North Korea, and b) only a regional solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis is likely to be viable. Thus, the six party talks as a format for addressing the North Korean nuclear issue are seen to have the potential to successfully serve a variety of important needs:

- The six party dialogue allows for third party participants in the dialogue process to play a mediating role in overcoming the substantial mutual mistrust on key issues that exists between the United States and DPRK.
- The six party process provides for “witnesses” among the third party participants in the dialogue process. These third parties can provide greater assurance that United States and DPRK will meet their commitments and hopefully strengthen the likelihood that both sides will implement any agreement faithfully.

- The six party process is perceived to contain and neutralize North Korea's penchant for crisis escalation and brinkmanship, as each tactical maneuver North Korea takes to escalate the crisis proves to be self-isolating because it unites other members of the process against North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear program. In other words, the six party process has been used not only to negotiate with North Korea, but also to consult with others about how to isolate North Korea's destabilizing behavior.
- The six party framework provides a mechanism by which each participant can share responsibility for achieving the objective of a denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. It provides a means by which to allow each party to show support for the specific measures taken to address North Korea's denuclearization and to meet its legitimate security concerns. This potential buy-in from affected neighbors can help strengthen regional security and alleviate concerns in the same way that the "quartet" currently tries to provide support for the Middle East peace process.
- Some observers also believe that the six party dialogue constrains the United States from prematurely escalating a confrontation with North Korea; i.e., by providing a negotiating venue and process that is an alternative to pursuit of sanctions via the UN Security Council.

However, there are also some serious criticisms of the six party process as it has been implemented thus far:

- The three plenary sessions have not provided for sufficient interaction and sharing of ideas away from the table at the working level.
- The six party process facilitates interaction between countries with no formal diplomatic ties (US-DPRK, Japan-DPRK), but the mechanism is unlikely to be sufficient to make progress in the absence of direct, bilateral negotiations between these parties in addition to the six party dialogue itself.
- Substantial progress on the six party talks agenda is likely to require more intensive interaction at a higher level, directly or indirectly involving the decision-makers from all the countries involved, especially the United States and the DPRK. (Given North Korea's top-down decision-making structure, it is especially the case that six party talks by themselves are unlikely to be successful absent a process that involves direct interaction through supporting bilateral channels from each country with the DPRK's key decision-maker, Kim Jong Il.)

### **Can North Korea Negotiate Away Its Nuclear Weapons Program?**

Now that the resumption of the next round of six party talks has been announced, it is important to remember that the diplomatic objective of achieving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is served not simply by the establishment of a dialogue process. Instead, it is important that the parties make substantive progress at the next round of talks and use the various means at their disposal to create the environment necessary to achieve a successful peacefully negotiated outcome of the process. Diplomacy through

six party negotiations is only one tool among several types of diplomatic and other measures required to convince the North Koreans to give up their pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The challenge inherent in creating any prospect for negotiating North Korea's denuclearization lies in convincing the North Koreans that they are in fact safer by giving up their nuclear weapons than by keeping them. The Bush administration has put forward the hypothesis that North Korean nuclear weapons pursuits are self-isolating and that nuclear weapons status would be regime-endangering rather than contributing to North Korea's regime survival. The United States has been successful in promoting a region-wide rhetorical consensus that indeed a nuclear North Korea is destabilizing rather than security-enhancing. This consensus has led to the withholding of some potential benefits to North Korea by both South Korea and China as a result of North Korea's nuclear pursuits. But the United States clearly has more work to do to convince allies and friends to continue to take concrete actions to block North Korea from continuing pursuit of its nuclear program.

For instance, although neither the PRC nor South Korea is a member of the Proliferation Security Initiative, one relatively uncontroversial form of cooperation that falls under that initiative involves the enhancement of export control measures to stop potential dual-use or nuclear component materials from going to North Korea. While there has been a great deal of media speculation about whether China might stop oil or food from going to the North, recent literature on smart sanctions suggests that the most effective approach to North Korea's illicit activities might involve application of financial controls on international financial transfers that directly benefit the top leadership of the regime.

However, it is also the case that the United States must convince North Korea that the tangible benefits of a negotiated agreement through the six party process are sufficient that the North Koreans perceive that an agreement to give up the nuclear weapons option really does enhance North Korea's regime survival. Although South Korean and Chinese friends of the United States have criticized the June 2004 proposal for its lack of "flexibility," the real problem is a lack of specificity that as a practical matter can only be resolved in the context of a resumption of negotiations. Although many observers focus on controversial economic incentives that might be perceived as a reward for North Korea's bad behavior, it is also fair to consider the possibility that the North has legitimate security concerns stemming from its historical conflict with the United States. In the end, the North Korean nuclear issue can not be fully disaggregated from fact that the state of war on the Korean peninsula has not yet been fundamentally resolved.

If indeed North Korea will not give up its nuclear weapons program under any circumstances, there is really no point in pursuing six party diplomacy. The key to success in gaining a favorable negotiated outcome of the six party talks process lies in the ability of the United States to work together with all the other parties both inside and outside of the six party process to convince the North Korean leadership that there is no independent option for survival through gaining nuclear weapons status. As one former senior administration official has stated, "you can't eat plutonium." In addition, all the

parties need to be convinced that diplomatic means have been exhausted before it will be possible to effectively pursue other measures. At that point, the United States and its allies may be faced with only coercive options to respond to the danger of a nuclear North Korea, but this most aspects of this option also would require cohesion among allies to be effective.

North Korea's February 10<sup>th</sup> announcement that it would "indefinitely suspend" its participation in the six party dialogue and its assertion that it is a nuclear weapons state represented defiance of the U.S. logic that North Korean pursuit of nuclear weapons is destabilizing to its own survival. With the suspension of its participation in the six party talks last February, the North Koreans essentially challenged the United States to prove that this hypothesis is true, implying that the North Koreans have an alternative to negotiating their own denuclearization. North Korean leaders assessed that they would be under greater pressure to give up their nuclear weapons program if they went to Beijing than if they stayed away.

In order to assure that the North Koreans remain serious about negotiations, the United States must continue to find ways to prove to the North Koreans that their pursuit of nuclear weapons endangers their own survival, but must also provide sufficient reassurance to convince North Korea—as well as our own friends and allies—that the U.S. is sincere in pursuing a diplomatic approach. At the same time, the North Korean effort to take advantage of differences among the parties to the negotiation requires the United States to actively consult with other parties in advance and to narrow the differences prior to the negotiation so that the North will understand that it has only one choice: to accept an offer that fairly achieves North Korea's denuclearization and addresses its legitimate security concerns. Now that the North Koreans are coming back to the talks, the task will be to further convince them that the only way to secure their own objectives is to give up nuclear pursuits and join the international community. North Korea must be allowed no choice but to negotiate away its nuclear weapons program in line with the consensus that exists among all the parties to the negotiation process.

### **The Emerging Diplomatic Challenge of Six Party Talks: Extending Dual Coordination With South Korea and China**

The primary challenge for the Bush administration is to find ways to utilize all possible diplomatic means—including both carrots and sticks—to enforce a regional consensus on the unacceptability of North Korea as a nuclear state. The consensus must be backed up by action to ensure that there is no viable alternative for North Korea to acceptance of a negotiated elimination of its nuclear program. In the context of six party talks, this increasingly means having a coordinated strategy that is designed to simultaneously bring along both South Korea and China, as partners of the United States that have critical points of leverage with North Korea (with additional support from Japan and Russia, the other participants in the talks), to utilize that leverage in ways that will yield positive diplomatic results at the six party talks.

Although South Korea and China have different relationships, respectively, with the United States, both countries have increasingly complementary positions and interests in the types of actions they are willing to take to push the North Korean nuclear crisis toward a resolution. As long as China and South Korea are taking into account each other's position while trying to delicately prod the North Korean leadership to action, any successful American strategy for addressing the North Korean nuclear issue must simultaneously mobilize both countries to move in concert with each other and the United States to address the issue. The only likely means by which to get a satisfactory negotiated outcome to the crisis is if North Korea recognizes that the positions of the other parties (including the United States, South Korea, and China) are both firm and aligned with each other, so that there is no room for North Korea to play on differences among the parties as a way to spur division and create space for itself to avoid making hard choices.

a) U.S.-ROK Alliance Coordination toward North Korea

American efforts to contain North Korea's nuclear weapons have suffered from a perception in Washington that South Koreans are no longer responsible or reliable allies. In fact, there is a growing divergence in perspectives between American and South Korean leaders about the future of the region, but those differences have thus far not inhibited issue-based cooperation or consultation between the two governments. The likelihood that the United States can achieve its strategic objective of eliminating the North Korean nuclear program without close cooperation from South Korea is quite low. In fact, one of North Korea's objectives as it pursues its nuclear weapons development efforts is to weaken the alliance and divide South Korea and the United States from each other.

This perception of divergence among allies has grown despite the fact that the United States, South Korea, and Japan have closely coordinated their positions throughout the crisis and prior to each round of six party negotiations via the trilateral coordination process. Trilateral coordination toward North Korea is a fundamental part of U.S. strategy in managing policy toward North Korea (a strategy with which Japan is closely aligned), but South Korea has come to be seen as setting the lowest common denominator (the member of the six party process most sympathetic to North Korea) in achieving an uncompromising consensus toward North Korea's nuclear development efforts. Even China, as convener of the talks and with its own interest in perpetuating North Korea's survival while formally opposing its nuclear development efforts, has increasingly taken its cues from South Korea in deciding how hard it will press North Korea to come back to negotiations. Perceptions that South Korea is an obstacle to a tougher stand towards North Korea have hurt South Korea's standing in Washington and could have a corrosive effect on alliance cooperation longer-term.

An ongoing strategic dialogue at the highest levels, building on last month's summit between President Roh Moo-hyun and President Bush, is an essential prerequisite to achieving the level of U.S.-ROK cooperation necessary to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue through negotiations. The United States needs to listen carefully to South

Korean security concerns and consider how to satisfy those concerns and also achieve a non-nuclear Korean peninsula. The United States also needs to keep in mind that the South Korean public is a vital constituency in determining the latitude and direction of South Korea's policy towards the alliance and toward North Korea. While the administration's public criticisms of Kim Jong Il may be aimed at weakening his rule in North Korea, the collateral damage has come in the form of South Korean public resentment about those comments in Seoul, making the Bush administration's pursuit of a united front against North Korea more difficult. Continuing American public diplomacy efforts designed to show that the United States is indeed pursuing all available options to peacefully resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis are likely to pay off in the form of greater South Korean public understanding and support for South Korean government cooperation with the United States through the alliance.

In view of the direct impact of the North Korean nuclear issue on South Korea's vital interests—whether through strengthened North Korean extortion efforts likely to accompany de facto nuclear status or through the costs deriving from continued escalation of the U.S.-DPRK crisis—the United States must recognize South Korea's need to play a responsible role in addressing the issue by making its interests heard more effectively in both Washington and Seoul. The recent resumption of inter-Korean ministerial dialogue, along with Minister of National Unification Chung Dong-young's meeting with Kim Jong Il, are indicative of South Korea's desire to play a constructive role in addressing and resolving the crisis. Strong coordination is important to allow South Korea to take a share of responsibility for the nuclear issue while ensuring that the key issues are fully addressed and resolved.

Given the broader strategic environment in Northeast Asia, it is hard to imagine that it will be possible to keep the Korean peninsula non-nuclear absent the continuation of a U.S. security guarantee and the promise of reliance on the U.S. nuclear umbrella to protect Seoul from potential aggression from either China or Japan. The United States may find that if it is willing to go to extra lengths to seek a peaceful solution to North Korea's nuclear weapons development efforts and support concrete measures intended to promote inter-Korean reconciliation in the near-term, there is a greater likelihood that it would be possible to strengthen alliance coordination to face less palatable scenarios.

#### b) Enhancing U.S.-PRC Strategic Cooperation on North Korea

By choosing to pursue a regional solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis, the Bush administration has assumed that China can be a responsible partner in addressing the North Korean nuclear issue. At the same time, how China manages the North Korean nuclear issue has become a critical litmus test for judging whether or not China is indeed ready to play a responsible regional and global role. The Chinese have taken several constructive steps thus far in response to American urgings. The Chinese took the initiative to host and facilitate the initial rounds of the six party talks, both to facilitate dialogue and—from a Chinese perspective—to prevent the consequences of the failure diplomacy that occurred prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq.



Chinese diplomats have pursued a form of shuttle diplomacy in an attempt to present American concerns to North Korea's top leaders (including Kim Jong Il) as well as to convey North Korean perceptions to the United States. However, there is frustration that the Chinese have tried to confine their role to that of convener in the dispute without fully expressing China's own opinions to North Korea as an interested party in the dispute. As the crisis has escalated, China's hesitancy to "rein in" the North Koreans by using its considerable leverage as North Korea's primary supplier of food and oil has been a source of frustration among those already skeptical about whether Beijing sees it as truly in China's interest to see the North Korean nuclear program shut down. From China's perspective, the leverage it has is primarily the type of influence that can prevent North Korea's destabilization, but is highly unlikely to persuade the North Koreans to take positive actions in response to U.S. pressure. Rather, the Chinese remain convinced that the United States holds the key to ending the crisis by providing the North with recognition in return for and end to North Korea's nuclear program. The Chinese do not want a nuclear North Korea, but do not yet perceive preventing a nuclear North Korea as such an overriding interest that it is willing to risk North Korea's destabilization to achieve the denuclearization objective. The Chinese also have their own long-term interest in maintaining and expanding their influence on the Korean peninsula, an objective that is likely to come into fundamental conflict with a continued U.S. presence there.

China has continued to work with the United States to convey a wide range of messages to North Korea, but there is clearly a limit to the amount of effort the Chinese are willing to expend on behalf of America's interests. The challenge for the United States has been to convince the PRC that North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons is in itself destabilizing and that there is no choice between a nuclear North Korea and a destabilized North Korea. The problem is that Chinese policy makers may doubt where U.S. demands to act more responsible end and where those same demands may also be part of an attempt to shift the blame and the responsibility for the North Korean crisis onto the PRC. One result is that the policy debate within China on North Korea has become more polarized within the Chinese bureaucracy in response to U.S. pressures.

China clearly has an interest in a non-nuclear North Korea and has shown much more active cooperation with the United States in the past several years than it did during the course of the first nuclear crisis of the 1990s, when the Chinese role was considerably more passive. As a beneficiary of globalization, the gaps in economic development and political/strategic thinking between the Chinese and North Korean leaderships, respectively, are dramatic, but these gaps also illustrate the fundamental Chinese dilemma with regard to the North: at what point does the strategic asset of even a weak North Korean buffer state become a strategic liability, and what is China willing to do to rein in North Korea's threat while at the same time maintaining and potentially even strengthening China's role on the Korean peninsula? Given the broader nature of the U.S.-China relationship and the complex strategic rivalry that is emerging with China's economic rise, the most difficult challenge at this delicate time is for the United States and China will find a way to deal with North Korea that provides reassurance to both sides and enhances regional stability in Northeast Asia.

## **Challenges for the Next Round of Six Party Talks**

The DPRK's traditional counterstrategy has been to take advantage of divisions among the other five parties to preserve its own space and options for maneuver. To the extent that the DPRK discerns differences in the positions of the other five parties, it will attempt to take advantage of the lowest common denominator and exploit alternatives to negotiation to maintain its independence of action. To the extent that divisions among the parties are visible, the DPRK will have room to manipulate those divisions.

The fundamental underlying division that has become apparent as talks have proceeded is over whether or not a second, multilateral understanding with the DPRK along the lines of the Agreed Framework is politically feasible. While Asian participants in the Six-Party Talks may prefer a new agreement with the DPRK as a way of relieving the crisis and bounding some key aspects of North Korea's nuclear development efforts, some American officials and many nongovernmental analysts remain doubtful that the DPRK will live up to any agreement that is not accompanied by a robust inspections regime. This fundamental difference in perspective over expectations for the talks may prove to be the most difficult one for the United States to bridge with its friends and allies, and it is the difference that offers the DPRK the most opportunity to exploit as discussions proceed. These fundamental differences are most starkly illustrated in attempts to define the scope, phasing, and potential benefits to North Korea in return for dismantlement.

There are two sets of more specific divisions among the six parties that have emerged at the talks. The first is how to determine the scope of North Korea's nuclear program that would be subject to inspections in any future agreement. This set of divisions is related to the question of whether or not the DPRK is required to admit that it has a uranium enrichment program. After DPRK Vice Minister Kang Sok Ju implied – if not asserted – the existence of a uranium enrichment program in his conversations with Assistant Secretary Kelly in October 2002, the DPRK has backtracked and now states that it will neither confirm nor deny the existence of a uranium enrichment program. The PRC government has publicly requested that the United States reveal the underlying proof behind its accusation that the DPRK has a uranium enrichment program and the DPRK continues to deny its existence, all the while quietly asking on the sidelines of negotiations what benefits would come to the DPRK if it were to give up such a program. In the end, the existence of the DPRK's uranium enrichment efforts is not so likely to be a sticking point or area of disagreement among the six parties given the availability of proof that might be offered by third parties among the suppliers, in combination with ongoing procurement efforts that point to the DPRK's continuing work in this area.

A more complex area of divergence among the six parties relates to whether the DPRK is entitled to maintain a nuclear program for "peaceful purposes" as part of the negotiation process. The DPRK's return to an IAEA and NPT-consistent position would not alone deny the DPRK the right to use nuclear materials for peaceful purposes, an argument that the DPRK may bolster by pointing to the need for continued productive employment of

scientists with nuclear backgrounds, not to mention its growing energy shortages. However, the Bush administration seeks a result that demonstrates the penalties of noncompliance with NPT obligations. One way of achieving that objective, while also underscoring that the DPRK through its actions over decades has failed to draw an effective distinction between peaceful nuclear applications and nuclear weapons development, is to deny the DPRK any involvement in nuclear-related research or applications. As long as nuclear production or research facilities, and hence access to spent fuel, exist in the North, the capability exists to easily reverse any denuclearization agreement. Thus far, the PRC, Russia, and ROK are not convinced that it is necessary to deny the DPRK an IAEA-compliant (including new obligations under the Additional Protocol) nuclear program if there are assurances that it will be used only for peaceful purposes.

Based on these broad differences in the positions of the six parties, it is reasonable to anticipate that there would be further divisions over what might constitute an effective verification regime and what types of monitoring activities might need to take place as part of that regime. Since these differences may exist quite apart from what the DPRK is likely to accept, it is easy to imagine that technical discussions over verification regimes and principles may require considerable time and effort to hash out at the negotiating table in Beijing.

### **Conclusion: Strategies and Prospects for Success**

If the Six Party Talks mechanism is to be effective, all parties must take steps to upgrade the talks and to treat the dialogue with greater urgency. Such an approach will require much more intensive efforts and support at higher levels from the parties concerned. (In addition, there are a variety of supplementary technical needs that can be anticipated if a true negotiation path were to actually develop through the six party process. I have attached a set of potential additional supporting activities intended to bolster the six party dialogue process. These activities have been identified through an ongoing/forthcoming study currently underway under the auspices of the Pacific Forum CSIS.)

Prior to the next round of talks, President Bush should make clear that Assistant Secretary Hill is speaking for the President and is empowered to lead international coordination with all concerned parties to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. In order to succeed as a viable venue for negotiations, the Six Party Talks process—and U.S.-ROK alliance coordination as part of the process—must be strengthened by underscoring the role of Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill as the key spokesman and point person for President Bush in managing full-time diplomacy with all members of the talks.

President Bush's public endorsement of Assistant Secretary Hill as the key point person for six party diplomacy would have a positive impact on the U.S.-ROK alliance relationship, as it would demonstrate to South Korea the seriousness with which the United States regards the North Korean nuclear issue and would provide a vehicle for

public leadership through U.S.-ROK alliance coordination as a critical basis upon which to resolve the crisis. Assistant Secretary Hill should make coordination with South Korea one of his main priorities through active consultations with top South Korean counterparts. At the same time, it will be important for him to take into consideration South Korean concerns and policy objectives as part of a strengthened coordination process.

A precedent for this type of cooperation already exists through the efforts that former Secretary of Defense William Perry made in 1998 and 1999 that led to the establishment of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG). That coordination has continued to provide an important institutional support for effective alliance coordination in the face of the second North Korean nuclear crisis. On the basis of a trilateral consensus, Assistant Secretary Hill should also reach out to China and Russia to ensure that there is unity among the participants about the importance of both stopping North Korea from developing a nuclear weapons program and endorsing an alternative that addresses North Korea's legitimate security concerns.

A Presidential clarification that Assistant Secretary Hill is the point person for leading our diplomatic strategy on the North Korean nuclear issue would achieve six objectives: a) underscore that the President sees the North Korean nuclear weapons threat as a priority and that he is behind the six party negotiations as the proper means by which to settle the North Korean nuclear issue, b) reinforce that the Bush administration speaks with one voice on policy toward North Korea, c) provide an effective means by which to discuss with South Korea and other neighbors of North Korea the specifics of the proposal tabled in June of 2004; i.e., how to pursue practical steps toward international financial assistance toward the rehabilitation of a non-nuclear North Korea, d) hold South Korea to a principled position that indeed a resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue is a necessary prerequisite for broader engagement with North Korea, e) ensure that the commitment of all parties to a non-nuclear Korean peninsula goes beyond rhetorical statements to actions designed to deny nuclear weapons components and fissile material from entering or leaving North Korea; i.e., promotion of effective and practical PSI-type measures involving all five of the six parties at the negotiating table, f) ensure that there is someone who is available to go to Pyongyang and to deliver President Bush's messages and directives on the six party dialogue directly to North Korea's top leaders as necessary.

In the end, high-level interaction with the key decision-maker in North Korea is probably unavoidable if negotiated progress is to be achieved. The PRC has already initiated a regular ad hoc bilateral dialogue with the DPRK through which it has been possible for senior party and military officials, including Kim Jong Il, to exchange views on progress in the Six Party Talks. Prime Minister Koizumi's personal involvement has proved helpful in the run-up to the third round of six party talks in June of 2004 as a result of his one-day visit to Pyongyang in May of that year, but the primary focus of that visit was the abduction issue, naturally Prime Minister Koizumi's number one policy objective. Most recently, the meeting of ROK Minister of National Unification Chung Dong-young with Kim Jong Il on June 15<sup>th</sup> played an important role in securing Kim Jong Il's

statement that North Korea would return to the six party talks before the end of July. It is likely that continued bilateral interaction in various forms by other parties to six party talks with Kim Jong Il will be a prerequisite for progress at the negotiation table in Beijing.

The United States should take the following additional steps to enhance the likelihood of success through the Six Party Talks mechanism. First, the United States should continue to demonstrate the attractiveness of the “Libyan model” through demonstrating that Libya is indeed gaining substantial benefits from the strategic decision Moammar Qhadafy made in December of 2003 to give up Libya’s nuclear weapons program. The United States has announced diplomatic normalization with Libya and should find other ways to support Libya’s expanded economic integration with the international community. Second, the IAEA should maintain a firm stance with Iran on enforcement of the Additional Protocol and abandonment of uranium enrichment as the basis for Iran to maintain a positive relationship with the international community. Showing resolve in the Iranian case will also be important as an object lesson for North Korea in the Six Party Talks.

Beyond the immediate diplomacy designed to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, the Six Party Talks process has already been recognized by many of the participants as having the potential to make an ongoing contribution to regional stability as the first official sub-regional dialogue in Northeast Asia. This consultation mechanism might in principle play an important role as part of an expanded dialogue on other regional security issues in Northeast Asia beyond the North Korean nuclear crisis. However, thus far the Six Party Talks has been driven solely by diplomacy surrounding the North Korean nuclear issue, with little if any practical consideration having been given to developing a broader formal discussion on other security issues facing the region. U.S. policy makers should take these developments into account as they consider how to most effectively preserve future American influence in Northeast Asia.

## **The Six-Party Talks: Developing a Roadmap for Future Progress**

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### **Executive Summary**

In June 2005, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il hinted that he may lift Pyongyang's indefinite suspension of its participation in the Six-Party Talks if conditions mature. If the talks resume, the record from the first three rounds casts doubt on whether such a forum is truly up to the challenge of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. Thus far, efforts by all of the parties have fallen short of the rhetorical commitments they have made to use the six-party process to resolve the second North Korean nuclear crisis.

However, circumstances suggest that no member of the Six-Party Talks favors military action as a vehicle for resolving the crisis, and there is little evidence that China or Russia is willing to take the North Korean nuclear issue to the UN Security Council or to devise some other forum for addressing this issue. There is also no sign that the Bush administration is ready to submit to North Korean demands to return to bilateral talks. Such a move would be viewed as an unacceptable capitulation to North Korea's negotiation demands and an unnecessary concession to North Korea's vexing negotiating tactics and strategy. Thus, for the time being, an eventual return to the six party talks is the only vehicle that might be able to satisfactorily address the North Korean nuclear issue.

In order to promote the chances that diplomacy through six party talks will succeed, we recommend the following lines of potential future research and activity:

- A. *Clearly define shared objectives.* All six parties agree to a common objective: the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. But what does this mean? Washington had previously called for the complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of all North Korean nuclear weapons programs (CVID). While this term has not been used recently, it remains the U.S. objective. But, Washington has never clearly defined the components much less reached agreement with the other five as to what this objective entails.
- B. *Clearly Define Lessons from the "Libyan Model" for the Six-Party Talks.* The U.S. has promoted the "Libyan model" for North Korea, but it is less than clear what this fully entails or what aspects of the Libyan experience are most

applicable to North Korea. Additional research should capture the experiences, shortcomings, and lessons learned from the Libyan case for potential application to other cases.

- C. *Determine the Functions and Modalities of a Six-Party Verification and Monitoring Regime for the DPRK.* A combination of official and unofficial efforts are needed to examine the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches of verification and monitoring DPRK compliance with six-party agreements. An examination of the regional and “IAEA Plus” formats might include a preliminary feasibility component to examine the requirements, structure, and governance of a new regional organization designed to implement verification requirements of any agreement achieved at the Six-Party Talks. Lessons might be drawn from other efforts, including the U.S.-Russian threat reduction effort and KEDO’s experience as an international organization tasked to implement an agreement with the DPRK. There should also be an assessment of skills and capabilities of potential participants in any multilateral verification regime, and the development of training materials for inspectors to develop a rigorous approach that applies high standards to such a process.
- D. *A Comprehensive Assessment of Technical Verification Needs and Modalities With Reference to Past Experience with the DPRK on Verification and Monitoring Issues (Verification Lessons from the First North Korean Nuclear Crisis).* Verification is an essential component of any six-party agreement. A program of research or an associated workshop designed to examine the technical lessons learned from the first North Korean nuclear crisis and their implications for future verification efforts with the DPRK could help in developing a future verification regime. This might involve specialists from other members of the six party dialogue to broaden understanding of the verification challenges that will be faced in implementing any future agreement with the DPRK on denuclearization.
- E. *Assess Future Needs of Six-Party Talks and Next Steps Toward Nuclear Transparency in Northeast Asia.* One possible vehicle for discussing nuclear transparency issues and the development of regional institutions in Northeast Asia while also supporting any likely verification vehicle that might develop through the Six-Party Talks would be a dialogue designed to build linkages between European officials and energy experts involved or familiar with EURATOM cooperative efforts and East Asian officials and nuclear specialists. Such an effort would follow along the lines of recently established dialogues between the OSCE and ROK and the OSCE and Japan, and might pave the way for discussion of what an effective regional institution might look like to respond to the challenges of nuclear transparency in Northeast Asia.
- F. *Enhance Monitoring and Enforcement to Prevent Illicit DPRK Procurement or Trade Activities.* History has demonstrated this need for monitoring and enforcement regimes to prevent circumvention and the threat of proliferation. A program of research, focused primarily on maritime and air security is needed, to

determine whether there are newly available monitoring technologies that might be effectively applied to support international and regional non-proliferation regimes such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), especially in the area of interdicting fissile materials transfers from the DPRK.

- G. *Beyond the Nuclear Issue: Missile Verification and the Six-Party Talks.* Solving the nuclear crisis is an essential first step but, by itself is insufficient to address all regional security concerns. The Japanese, in particular, have legitimate concerns about DPRK missile capabilities. Research is needed to determine if joint U.S.-Japan efforts on missile defense are able to fully respond to Japan's security concerns. This research should also explore the tools Japan might use to induce the DPRK to give up its missile development program and how the missile issue should be dealt with in relation to multilateral security assurances that might be offered as part of the Six-Party Talks.
- H. *Beyond the Nuclear Issue: Security Assurances and the Six-Party Talks.* One point that all parties agree upon is the need for multilateral security assurances as part of the final settlement. All six parties have legitimate security concerns (like Tokyo's missile concerns) that must be addressed. The first step must be a clear articulation of the respective security concerns of each participant, so that a comprehensive settlement can one day be reached.